

## THE NEW MOTOR-CAR LACQUERS.

Probably the chief factor in prolonging the slump is the use of new lacquers in the motor-car industry. For a time it was feared that the lacquers would entirely displace varnishes in that industry. This new lacquer is a type of nitro-cellulose which is made much as gun-cotton is manufactured, by dissolving purified cotton in nitric acid and putting it through a process that prepares it for the admixture of solvents, gums and pigments, to produce an opaque enamel which dries rapidly in the air. From six to eight coatings in all are said to be necessary, air-guns being used for spraying on the lacquer. Successive coats can be put on at thirty-minute intervals. It is claimed by one manufacturer that two first-class workmen can finish the enamelling of a sedan in one and a quarter days. It is generally understood that the varnishing of a car takes from fifteen to twenty-days, so that if the lacquering can be done in less than two days it is clear that the saving in time amounts to about a fortnight. Where cars are being turned out by the thousand, as is actually the case, the savings in factory space and the savings in shortening the period of production by a fortnight must reach enormous sums, and it is obvious that if the lacquers can at all compare with varnishes preference must be given to the lacquers.

The fact that the best-known lacquer is manufactured by a division of E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Co. gives it an immediate prestige. A number of well-known American cars were turned out in 1924 and 1925 with the new lacquer finish, many of them being now in use in New Zealand. It is considered that until about the end of 1925 no definite conclusion can be arrived at in regard to the place lacquer is likely to hold in the motor-car industry, but it is already claimed that it will be necessary to give the lacquer a finishing coat of varnish to produce the requisite lustre that is demanded in a motor-car finish. If so, the lacquers are not nearly so formidable competitors of varnishes as has been thought.

## BLED BUSH GUMS.

During the year there has been a shortage of all grades of bled bush gums. This is a result of few forests being bled at the present time. Most of the output is coming forward from very small forests and from odd lots of from one to two trees scattered throughout the province, with the addition of a good deal of "poached" gum from trees that are being bled without the knowledge of the owners. It is probable that one fairly large forest will be bled very shortly, and, if so, this will ease the situation and help to keep the supply nearer the demand.

The greater part of the kauri forests now remaining are the property of the State, and, as was stated in my report last year, investigation is being made by the State Forest Service as to the advisability of bleeding the trees. So far no definite pronouncement has been made, and it would appear that the owners of the largest privately-owned kauri forests remaining are awaiting a lead from the State Forest Service.

## PRODUCTION OF KAURI-GUM DURING THE YEAR.

As is stated in another part of this report, the quantity of gum held in the City of Auckland is a much larger percentage of the total holdings than has been the case for some years. A great deal of gum received in Auckland during the past year had been dug in previous years, and was brought to town by diggers who were leaving the fields to take up other work. Last year most of the large country accumulations of gum, except "chalk" gradings, were sent into Auckland, so that the total holdings on the gumfields are comparatively small.

During the latter end of the year the continued dullness resulted in many diggers leaving the fields, and at the present time (July, 1925) there are fewer diggers on the fields than for a long time past. Several more of the gum-washing companies, including Parenga Kauri Oils (Limited), the largest and pioneer gum-washing concern, have gone into liquidation. The English company referred to in my report last year as having purchased a gum-bearing property and commenced operations with a paid-up capital of £95,000 has closed down for the present. Production on a large scale is therefore out of the question during 1925, and there can be little doubt that the output in all gradings must be comparatively small.

The gum received at Auckland from the gumfields is shown, month by month, for the past five years, in the following table:—

*Kauri-gum received in Auckland.*

	1920-21.	1921-22.	1922-23.	1923-24.	1924-25.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
April .. .. .	612	191	543	480	439
May .. .. .	532	331	514	613	501
June .. .. .	370	358	654	459	344
July .. .. .	434	404	548	352	363
August .. .. .	376	368	689	522	407
September .. .. .	577	508	781	450	373
October .. .. .	447	420	610	490	471
November .. .. .	371	482	601	612	427
December .. .. .	339	285	667	576	591
January .. .. .	289	331	590	506	525
February .. .. .	301	466	658	475	492
March .. .. .	359	608	700	537	520
	5,007	4,752	7,546	6,072	5,453